

**A CORRELATION STUDY
BETWEEN PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED
AND COPING MECHANISMS OF DETAINEES' SPOUSES
AT BUREAU OF JAIL MANAGEMENT AND PENOLOGY
CITY JAIL CALAMBA, LAGUNA**

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Abstract

Few studies dwell on the effects of imprisonment on spouses of the prisoners, which have been found out to be affected by their husband's incarceration in different ways. Despite this interest, little concern is given and known about the problems that these spouses experience and the different strategies that they employ in order to overcome their vulnerability and cope with their new situation. This study aims to determine if there is a significant relationship between the problems encountered by the respondents and their coping mechanisms in which 38 spouses of the detainees at Bureau of Jail Management and Penology City Jail Calamba, Laguna were recruited as the respondents of the study. A correlation study is utilized in gathering the needed information with the help of a survey-questionnaire wherein the statistical results have been supported by a structured form of interview conducted among 10 spouses that were selected from the actual respondents. The study has found out that the respondents experience a high level of economic, social, emotional and mental problems, a low degree of behavioral disturbances and coping mechanisms are found to be adaptively employed by the respondents of the study. The findings indicate that either of the identified economic, social, emotional, behavioral and mental problems has no correlation with coping mechanisms.

Keywords: *detainees, spouses, problems, coping mechanisms, BJMP*

INTRODUCTION

“Prison sentence are meant to punish those who have committed the crime; but in reality the offender’s entire family is often punished and everybody close” -*Anonymous Prisoner*

The economic, social, emotional, behavioral, physical, spiritual and psychological aspects of the families of prisoners are affected when someone from the kin is imprisoned because of the problems, worries, stress and frustrations that they experience due to the imprisonment of a relative. It is because family members are involved and affected when a relative experience something for they are concerned to whoever is part of their family unit.

Moreover, a family is regarded as the most important unit of society. This is where every individual depends, from his/her physiological needs up to the development of the puzzle pieces of his/her personality. Each person from a family is expected to be in contact with the other members because this is where he/she came from.

However, it is stressful on the part of the detainee’s partner because she needs to manage and support the needs of their family alone, which may impair the daily and normal functioning of the spouse who is left at home because it loads variety of stressors on their shoulders, however she must be able to accept the situation and handle all the problems that their family encounters.

With all the disturbances that are being experienced by these wives, the role of coping mechanisms must be highlighted because this will help them to be able to accept the situation in which their partner is involved, help

them cope with all the problems and worries they have and provide relief from their anxiety.

According to Evangelista (2004), coping mechanisms can be described as the sum total of ways in which people deal with minor to major stress and trauma. Some of these processes are unconscious ones, others are learned behavior, and still others are skills that are consciously mastered in order to reduce stress, or other intense emotions like depression. Not all coping mechanisms equally beneficial, and some can actually be very detrimental.

In this light, the researchers have chosen to study the problems that are being encountered by the spouses of the detainees because they would want to determine the effects of imprisonment, aside to the prisoner, particularly its impact to the family of the offenders as well.

Research Framework

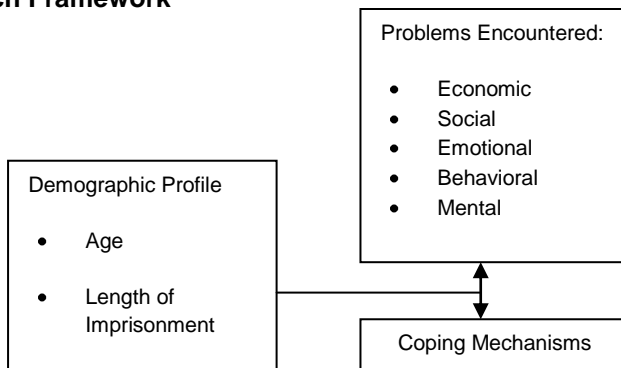


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The problems that the respondents encounter at varying degrees in terms of economic, social, emotional, behavioral and mental difficulties because of the detainment of their husbands were correlated with the coping mechanisms that they employ, wherein the demographic profile of the

detainees' spouses at the selected locale such as age and length of imprisonment could have an influence on how the respondents of the study perceive and respond to their problems encountered.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the problems encountered and coping mechanisms of spouses of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP)- Calamba, Laguna.

Specifically, this sought to achieve the following:

1. to determine the demographic profile of the respondents when they are grouped according to:
 - 1.1. age; and,
 - 1.2. length of imprisonment.

2. to determine the mean score for the problems encountered of the respondents according to:
 - 2.1 economic;
 - 2.2 social;
 - 2.3 emotional;
 - 2.4 behavioral; and,
 - 2.5 mental.

3. to determine the mean score of identified coping strategies of respondents

4. to determine the mean score of the overall coping mechanisms of the respondents

5. to determine if there is a significant difference in the level of problems encountered and coping mechanism when respondents are grouped according by age and length of imprisonment
6. to determine if there is a significant relationship between the level of problems encountered and the coping mechanism

METHOD

Descriptive correlation was used in the study, which determined if there was a relationship between problems encountered and coping mechanisms of the respondents. A survey-questionnaire and structured interviews were utilized as tests instruments that have undergone pilot testing, measure for internal consistency and expert analysis. A total of 38 detainees' spouses were recruited as the respondents of the study at a non-random convenient sampling, wherein 10 from them participated in the interviews conducted by the researchers, which have validated and supported the quantitative data obtained from the survey-questionnaire.

Furthermore, the study was conducted at the Bureau of Jail and Management and Penology City Jail Calamba, Laguna because of the accessibility and availability of the respondents.

Frequency distribution tables and percentage count, weighted means, spearman's rank correlation and analysis of variance were used in treating the statistical data derived from the respondents' answers in the test instruments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Below are the results of the gathered data:

Demographic profile

Spouses of the detainees whose ages were within 21 to 40 years old dominated in this study. Meanwhile, the respondents of the study who were 41 to 65 were the least populated.

In this study, the grouping of age brackets were based on the Psychosocial Theory of Erik Erikson, where the 21 to 40 bracket fall into young adulthood stage and age 41-65 refer to middle and older adults.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents in terms of age

Age	F	%
41-65	11	29
21-40	27	71
TOTAL	38	100

Majority of the respondents' husbands were detained for 1.1 to 2 years and the husbands of the respondents who have been serving their sentence for 3.1 to 4, 5.1 to 6, 6.1 to 7 and 7.1 to 8 years were the least considered length of imprisonment bracket.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents in terms of years of imprisonment

Years	F	%
7.1 – 8	2	5
6.1 – 7	2	5
5.1 – 6	2	5
4.1 – 5	3	8
3.1 – 4	2	5

2.1 – 3	9	24
1.1 – 2	12	32
0 – 1	6	16
TOTAL	38	100

Problems encountered

The table below shows the assessment of the level of economic problems that the respondents experience. Most of the respondents agreed that they were facing difficulties in providing the basic needs of each of the family member since the time that their husbands were detained, which earned a 2.82 mean score. With a 2.53 mean, the least experienced economic problem of the respondents was their inability to send their children to undergo formal education in schools and other learning institutions. In general, table 3 had a total weighted mean of 2.65 which stated that the responses of the respondents fell in the *Agree* scale, which implied that they were experiencing a high level of economic problems.

Thus, the spouses of the detainees who participated in the study encountered difficulty in financing and meeting the needs of each member of their family unit.

Table 3. Distribution of responses and mean score for economic problem

ITEMS	Strongly Agree (4)		Agree (3)		Disagree (2)		Strongly Disagree (1)		MEAN	Verbal Interpretation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1. I am facing difficulty in meeting the basic needs of my family.	10	0.26	16	0.42	7	0.18	5	0.13	2.82	High Problem Encountered
2. I experience inability to send my children to school.	8	0.21	13	0.34	8	0.21	9	0.24	2.53	High Problem Encountered

3. I could no longer secure the health of my children.	7	0.18	16	0.42	8	0.21	7	0.18	2.61	High Problem Encountered
	Overall								2.65	High Problem Encountered

Table 4 shows the level of social problems that the respondents experience. Majority of the respondents were suffering from difficulties due to forced separation from their spouse with a 3.37 computed weighted mean. The item that has the least mean stated that their children do not encounter difficulties in dealing with the people around them as stated by its 1.87 computed mean. In general, this table has a 2.50 weighted mean that has a verbal interpretation of *Agree*, which implied that the respondents and their family encountered problems in adjusting with their new situation because of the lack of support, stigma and demoralization that they were receiving from their family, friends and others. Hence, the respondents experienced a high level of social problems.

Table 4. Distribution of responses and mean score for social problem

ITEMS	Strongly Agree (4)		Agree (3)		Disagree (2)		Strongly Disagree (1)		MEAN	Verbal Interpretation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
8. I am suffering from forced separation with spouse.	24	0.63	8	0.21	2	0.05	4	0.11	3.37	High Problem Encountered
9. Our family experiences lack of support.	13	0.34	7	0.18	9	0.24	9	0.24	2.63	High Problem Encountered
10. I am often misunderstood by others.	8	0.21	11	0.29	9	0.24	10	0.26	2.45	Low Problem Encountered
11. My children experience difficulty in adjusting because of the lack of the father-figure.	11	0.29	16	0.42	5	0.13	6	0.16	2.84	High Problem Encountered
12. Our family experiences disruption of familial relationships.	4	0.11	9	0.24	8	0.21	17	0.45	2.00	Low Problem Encountered
13. Our family is	13	0.34	11	0.29	7	0.18	7	0.18	2.79	High Problem

being judged by other people.											Encountered
14. Our children experience difficulty in dealing with others.	3	0.08	4	0.11	16	0.42	15	0.39	1.87		Low Problem Encountered
15. Our family suffers from deterioration of social ties.	3	0.08	9	0.24	14	0.37	12	0.32	2.08		Low Problem Encountered
									2.50		High Problem Encountered
	Overall										

Table 5 presents the respondents' assessment on the level of problems that they encountered in terms of emotional aspect. Majority of the respondents has experienced and felt extreme sadness because of the imprisonment of their spouse with a 3.50 weighted mean. However, the emotional problems that were least experienced by the spouses of the detainees were the feelings of shame and paranoia that they encountered when they were thinking that they were being talked about by the people around them by which these items shared a similar computed weighted mean of 2.50. Overall, the level of emotional problems of the respondents fall in *Agree* with 2.76 weighted mean implied that they experienced challenges on their emotional stability like extreme sadness, sensitivity, paranoia, helplessness, hopelessness, and shame because of their situation. Therefore, the partners of the detainees have high level of emotional problems.

Table 5. Distribution of responses and mean score for emotional problem

ITEMS	Strongly Agree (4)		Agree (3)		Disagree (2)		Strongly Disagree (1)		MEAN	Verbal Interpretation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
12. I become sensitive in smaller things.	11	0.29	11	0.29	10	0.26	6	0.16	2.71	High Problem Encountered
13. I feel extreme sadness.	24	0.63	11	0.29	1	0.03	2	0.05	3.50	Very High Problem Encountered
14. I feel that I am helpless	9	0.24	11	0.29	12	0.32	6	0.16	2.61	High Problem

and that there's no more hope.										Encountered
15. I encounter feeling of shame.	9	0.24	10	0.26	10	0.26	9	0.24	2.50	High Problem Encountered
16. I become paranoid that our family is being talked about by the people around me.	5	0.13	16	0.42	10	0.26	7	0.18	2.50	High Problem Encountered
Overall									2.76	High Problem Encountered

Table 6 shows the level of behavioral problems that are encountered by the respondents. According to the 2.26 computed weighted mean, the behavioral problem that has the highest mean was the changes of mood that the respondents have observed from them, while the item that has the least mean of 1.59 stated that most of them did not experience delinquency in their family. In general, the spouses of the detainee *disagreed* that they were encountering the given list of behavioral problems at 1.91 weighted mean.

Hence, the respondents experienced a low level of behavioral problems due to the effects of their husbands' imprisonment.

Table 6. Distribution of responses and mean score for behavioral problem

ITEMS	Strongly Agree (4)		Agree (3)		Disagree (2)		Strongly Disagree (1)		MEAN	Verbal Interpretation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
17. I easily become aggressive.	2	0.05	10	0.26	15	0.39	11	0.29	2.08	Low Problem Encountered
18. I run away from responsibilities.	4	0.11	1	0.03	11	0.29	22	0.58	1.66	Low Problem Encountered
19. My family experience delinquency.	2	0.05	4	0.11	7	0.18	25	0.66	1.55	Low Problem Encountered
20. I could observe that I easily change my mood.	5	0.13	10	0.26	14	0.37	9	0.24	2.29	Low Problem Encountered
Overall									1.89	Low Problem Encountered

Table 7 presents the assessment of the respondents on the level of the mental problems that they encounter. The detainees' partners experienced anxiety or excessive worry at a very high degree, which obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.67. On the other hand, the respondents have developed sleeping and eating disorders at a low level according to its 2.47 weighted mean. Overall, the respondents have assessed that they were experiencing mental health problems with 2.76 mean at a high degree. Therefore, the partners of the detainees have high level of mental problems.

Table 7. Distribution of responses and mean score for mental problem

ITEMS	Strongly Agree (4)		Agree (3)		Disagree (2)		Strongly Disagree (1)		MEAN	Verbal Interpretation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
21. I experience anxiety or excessive worry.	11	0.29	12	0.32	14	0.37	1	0.03	3.67	High Problem Encountered
22. I develop sleeping and eating disorders.	9	0.24	10	0.26	9	0.24	10	0.26	2.47	Low Problem Encountered
23. I experience inability to focus in the things that I need to do, which affects me in planning and making decisions.	11	0.29	8	0.21	10	0.26	9	0.24	2.55	High Problem Encountered
24. I usually forget the things that I need to do.	6	0.16	8	0.21	14	0.37	10	0.26	2.26	Low Problem Encountered
25. I experience flashbacks that can cause anxiety.	12	0.32	16	0.42	6	0.16	4	0.11	2.95	High Problem Encountered
Overall									2.76	High Problem Encountered

The table below presents the coping strategies that the respondents employed at varying degrees. The coping strategy that has the highest mean of 3.24 meant that spouses of the detainees were being optimistic with the problems that they were encountering because of their husband's imprisonment. They were searching for positive and were trying to learn from

their experiences. On the other hand, the coping mechanism that was assessed to be the least utilized compensatory strategy was to turn to vices like smoking, alcohol drinking and use of drugs as their outlet according to its computed weighted mean of 1.53.

Table 8. Distribution of responses and mean score for coping strategies

Coping Strategies	Strongly Agree (4)		Agree (3)		Disagree (2)		Strongly Disagree (1)		MEAN	Verbal Interpretation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
26. I deny or refuse to acknowledge that we have problems.	7	0.18	11	0.29	12	0.32	8	0.21	2.45	Disagree
27. I hide or suppress uncomfortable thoughts.	4	0.11	9	0.24	9	0.24	16	0.42	2.03	Disagree
28. I help others because I think I am helping myself.	18	0.47	9	0.24	4	0.11	7	0.18	3.00	Agree
29. I mentally or physically avoid something that causes distress.	16	0.42	12	0.32	4	0.11	6	0.16	3.00	Agree
30. I socialize with other people	20	0.53	12	0.32	2	0.05	4	0.11	3.26	Agree
31. I usually cry to show my emotions.	3	0.08	13	0.34	10	0.26	12	0.32	2.18	Disagree
32. I avoid talking to others.	16	0.42	17	0.45	2	0.05	3	0.08	3.21	Agree
33. I separate myself from parts of my life.	13	0.34	7	0.18	8	0.21	10	0.26	2.61	Agree
34. I escape reality of life instead of engaging in a world of possibility.	6	0.16	6	0.16	12	0.32	14	0.37	2.11	Disagree
35. I confront my problems by thinking of a solution.	21	0.55	7	0.18	6	0.16	4	0.11	3.18	Agree
36. I just procrastinate and do nothing.	20	0.53	10	0.26	5	0.13	3	0.08	3.24	Agree
37. I adopt children mannerisms and behaviors as my way of handling my problems.	10	0.26	10	0.26	7	0.18	11	0.29	2.50	Agree
38. I redirect my disappointment and all negative feelings to other objects.	3	0.08	10	0.26	10	0.26	15	0.39	2.03	Disagree
39. I make myself busy for me not to bother my problems.	16	0.42	13	0.34	3	0.08	6	0.16	3.03	Agree
40. I talk to a	9	0.24	10	0.26	10	0.26	9	0.24	2.50	Agree

Psychologist or someone who has the capacity to help me.											
41. I usually eat a lot.	10	0.26	11	0.29	9	0.24	8	0.21	2.61	Agree	
42. I blame other people for what is happening to our family.	16	0.42	11	0.29	5	0.13	6	0.16	2.97	Agree	
43. I am having my outlet like vices like smoking, alcohol drinking and use of drugs.	26	0.68	7	0.18	2	0.05	3	0.08	3.47	Agree	
44. I seek help from the people around me.	10	0.26	10	0.26	10	0.26	8	0.21	2.58	Agree	
45. I look at things positively.	22	0.58	8	0.21	3	0.08	5	0.13	3.24	Agree	
46. I stop myself from bursting or releasing my negative feelings.	9	0.24	11	0.29	11	0.29	7	0.18	2.58	Agree	
47. I avoid anything that will remind me of my problems.	7	0.18	12	0.32	10	0.26	9	0.24	2.45	Disagree	
48. I assign reasons to what I am experiencing.	9	0.24	10	0.26	11	0.29	8	0.21	2.53	Agree	
49. I engage in religious activities to strengthen me at the midst of my problems.	14	0.37	15	0.39	5	0.13	4	0.11	3.03	Agree	
50. I am avoiding to develop negative feelings towards my problems.	17	0.45	12	0.32	6	0.16	3	0.08	3.13	Agree	

The table below shows the overall level of coping mechanisms wherein it was found out those spouses of the detainees were trying to adjust with their situation and overcome their problems encountered by the help of compensatory strategies as stated by its 2.79 computed weighted mean.

Table 9. Overall level of coping mechanisms of the respondents

Indicator	Mean	Verbal Description
Overall Coping Mechanisms	2.79	Coping Mechanisms is Adaptive

There are no significant differences on the problems encountered of the respondents in terms of economic, social, emotional, behavioral and

mental aspects when they were grouped by age and length of imprisonment; therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 10. Significant difference of problems encountered for age and years of imprisonment

Problems Encountered	Age		Years of Imprisonment	
	Computed Level of Significance	Decision	Computed Level of Significance	Decision
Economic	0.97	Accept Null Hypothesis	0.76	Accept Null Hypothesis
Social	0.56	Accept Null Hypothesis	0.10	Accept Null Hypothesis
Emotional	0.89	Accept Null Hypothesis	0.54	Accept Null Hypothesis
Behavioral	0.95	Accept Null Hypothesis	0.21	Accept Null Hypothesis
Mental	0.91	Accept Null Hypothesis	0.67	Accept Null Hypothesis

**Difference of Mean Score is Significant at .01 level (2-tailed)*

The coping mechanisms employed by the respondents in coping with their problems encountered which have resulted from their husbands' detainment were not significantly different when age and years of imprisonment were taken into consideration. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 11. Significant difference for coping mechanism

Profiling	Computed Level of Significance	Decision
Age	0.12	Accept Null Hypothesis
Years of Imprisonment	0.55	Accept Null Hypothesis

**Difference of Mean Score is Significant at .01 level (2-tailed)*

As shown by the table below, the significant relationship between the problems encountered in terms of economic, social, emotional, behavioral and mental disturbances and coping mechanisms of the respondents. With a 0.08 correlation coefficient, economic problems and coping mechanisms has direct relationship but weak and not significant. Social problems and coping mechanism has a direct relationship but not significant between each other. In the same manner, emotional problems and coping mechanism has a weak indirect relationship but not significant. On the other hand, behavioral problems have strong indirect relationship but not significant. Mental problems and coping mechanism have also weak and indirect relationship but not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, wherein each five categories of the problems and difficulties experienced by the spouses of detainees have no significant relationship with the coping strategies.

Table 12. Pearson’s r correlation between problems encountered and coping mechanism

Problems Encountered	Results	Coping Mechanism
Economic	Pearson's r	0.08
	Computed Level of Significance	0.64
	Decision	Accept Null Hypothesis
Social	Pearson's r	-0.07
	Computed Level of Significance	0.67
	Decision	Accept Null Hypothesis
Emotional	Pearson's r	-0.20
	Computed Level of Significance	0.23
	Decision	Accept Null Hypothesis
Behavioral	Pearson's r	-1.07

	Computed Level of Significance	0.09
Mental	Decision	Accept Null Hypothesis
	Pearson's r	-2.80
	Computed Level of Significance	0.88
	Decision	Accept Null Hypothesis

**Correlation is Significant at .01 level (2-tailed)*

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

The researchers have come up with the following conclusions based on the statements of the problems:

1. Majority of the respondents' age within the 26 to 30 age bracket and whose husbands are detained at Bureau of Jail Management and Penology City Jail Calamba Laguna for 3-4 years.
2. In general, the spouses of the detainees have found out to experience economic, social, emotional, behavioral, mental problems at a high level.
3. The respondents of the study have a low level of behavioral problems due to the detainment of their husbands.
4. The respondents of the study are adaptively coping with their problems encountered.
5. Most of the respondents who are 41 to 65 years old experience economic and social problems at a high level.

6. High levels of emotional and mental problems are experienced by majority of the respondents from 50 and above age bracket.
7. The respondents whose ages within 46 to 50 years old encounter the highest level of behavioral problems among the two age bracket but still at a low degree.
8. It is found out that the detainees' spouses who are 21 to 40 years old handle their situation and cope with their difficulties more adaptively.
9. There are no significant differences on the problems encountered of the respondents when age and length of imprisonment are taken into consideration.
10. The findings show that the demographic profile which includes age and the length of imprisonment have no significant differences with the coping strategies that the detainees' spouses employ.
11. Each of the five grouped problems has no significant relationship with the identified compensatory strategies.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn from the conclusions:

1. The future researchers may conduct the study in a larger population, wherein they may recruit respondents from other locale to further improve and differentiate this with other studies.
2. Since the spouses and family of the detainees are found to be economically, socially, emotionally, behaviorally and mentally affected by the detainment of their husbands, the government and other institutions must provide programs, activities, and support to

these group of people that will help them to accept and adjust with their situation.

3. Debriefing and consultations must be provided for the respondents and their families that will increase their awareness and ability to positively respond to the conflicts that the families of the detainees experience.
4. Better service and more directive programs must be given by the BJMP that will improve the condition and well- being of the detainees or prisoners, which may produce good effects on their partners and families.
5. Social service agencies must provide services to the prisoners and their families that are aligned in meeting the unique demands of the imprisonment and reentry process that will help in mitigating the harmful effects of incarceration like community-based drug treatment, counseling, relapse prevention, family interventions, and livelihood projects that will benefit both the detainees and families of their own.
6. The researchers suggest that the general category of crime to which the case of the husbands of the respondents fall may be added and identified as part of the demographic profile and whether the case are ongoing or have already been decided.

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